

half of you by Potrix

Series: [value of a loving father \[2\]](#)

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Summary:

Richard's never been the coddling type of parent, and neither has Patricia. Richard can't put a finger on the why, but the older Steve had gotten, the more distant the both of them had grown from their son. Maybe it's because Steve has always been strong-willed and independent, though Richard's aware that that's a terrible excuse.

But he hadn't realised, until yesterday, just how far removed he's become from everything that's going on in Steve's life. How little he actually, truly knows about his child, outside of work and academics.

The knowledge of his ignorance doesn't sit well with him.

[Richard 'Unflappable' Harrington discovers a little something about his son's relationship with a certain friend.]

half of you

Author's Note:

- For [FaerieFyre](#).

This is my apology to [FaerieFyre](#) for putting a random OC into their head. Sorry about that! (Have some more.) It was supposed to be the last scene of the previous story, but then it kind of didn't fit the vibe? Anyway, it probably makes much more sense if you read the first fic. And why wouldn't you? More content!

◦ a dad is half of you, so he knows you better than you might even know yourself ◦

When the jet lag rears its ugly head shortly after midnight, Richard isn't surprised. He'd gone up to bed at around 4:30 in the afternoon, which means he's gotten more sleep already than during an average night. No wonder he is wide awake.

He'll have to be strict about fixing his sleep schedule, though, because he knows himself. He's a night owl, and without Patricia home to gently yet firmly bully him into going to sleep at a reasonable hour, he'll end up reading or working through the nights.

So, yawning and stretching a particularly persistent kink out of his back, Richard moves down to the kitchen for some herbal tea. What he really craves is a strong cup of coffee, but that's definitely neither a good, nor a responsible idea.

He rifles through the cabinets while he waits for his tea to cool, not really hungry, but in the mood for a snack. He keeps an ear out, all the while, for Steve and his friend, but the house is quiet.

They both must have been exhausted, after the events of the previous day.

Richard pulls a face when he thinks about his less than pleasant

encounter with Neil Hargrove. And then he sighs, stomach churning with a mixture of guilt and helplessness.

He's never been the coddling type of parent, and neither has Patricia. Richard can't put a finger on the why, but the older Steve had gotten, the more distant the both of them had grown from their son. Maybe it's because Steve has always been strong-willed and independent, though Richard's aware that that's a terrible excuse.

But he hadn't realised, until yesterday, just how far removed he's become from everything that's going on in Steve's life. How little he actually, truly knows about his child, outside of work and academics.

The knowledge of his ignorance doesn't sit well with him.

Tea finished, and mind made up, Richard heads back upstairs. There's a faint light coming from under Steve's bedroom door, probably from a bedside lamp, but behind the door, everything's still silent. Richard is careful not to make too much noise as he opens the door, although Steve's always been a heavy sleeper.

Steve's room is messy, as usual, and Richard rolls his eyes as he picks up a damp towel, moving quietly across the plush carpeting to hang it up in the ensuite. It's only when he comes back out of the bathroom that he takes a closer look at the bed, and the boy sleeping in it.

Or, rather, the boys.

Because both Steve and Billy are there, in Steve's bed, curled towards each other as if seeking each other out, even in sleep. Billy is nestled under a heap of blankets, only his shoulders and tousled head of hair peeking out at the top, while Steve's sprawled out mostly on top of the blankets, with just his feet shoved under them, tangled with Billy's.

It's—intimate.

That's the only word Richard can think of, right now.

He stands, somewhat awkwardly, at the foot of the bed, waiting for the surprise to hit, before he realises that it won't. Because while he

can't say he'd expected this, seeing it does make sense, in hindsight.

Steve had been as scared as Richard had ever seen him, yesterday. For Billy. And Steve's always had a caring, gentle side under all that blustering, teenage posturing, yes, but Richard should probably have noticed that this, between him and Billy, was—something else.

Something more.

Mentally adding this—whatever it ends up being, exactly—to the list of things he should almost definitely talk to his son about, Richard goes and grabs a spare blanket out of the closet. He drapes it over Steve, gently tucking in the edges, then strokes his fingers through Steve's hair, lingering.

The way Steve scrunches up his nose, looking huffy, makes Richard smile to himself.

As he straightens back up, Richard's gaze falls on Billy again, and he startles a little when he finds him already watching him back. Billy's holding himself very still, and the only thing Richard can hear, even from this close, is the ever so slight whistle of his stuffed-up, swollen nose.

"There should be some Tylenol in the cabinet under the sink," Richard whispers. He doesn't expect an answer, and he doesn't get one, at least not out loud. Billy does sink back into the pillows, though. Not relaxed, but less tense. "Get some more sleep, okay?"

After a moment, Billy nods. Just once.

When Richard takes one last glance back at them on his way out of the room, Steve has rolled practically on top of Billy, clinging like a limpet.

Well.

Looks like that extra blanket wasn't necessary after all.

Author's Note:

Go check out my other [work](#), or come over and say

hi on [tumblr](#).